

distribute the water at constant pressure, without stint, to the top of every house.

To provide a tubular back-drain, with suitable soil-pipe and sink, to every house now lacking such convenience.

To alter the existing drains of deposit to tubular sewers of rapid flow, so that the sewage may be rapidly conveyed out of London.

To dry the humid soil of the low-lying London districts by a system of permeable drains similar to those employed in agriculture.

To consolidate the administration of water-supply, sewerage, house-drainage, and surface-cleansing, so as to bring about an improvement of the service, coupled with large economy.

To enforce and extend the laws against the pollution of the air by smoke.

To amend the Buildings Act, so as to insure that all dwellings hereafter constructed in London shall be suitable for healthy habitation.

Some strong statements, especially with respect to the burial question, were made by members of the deputation, and the Prime Minister in his reply, which he gave at considerable length, admitted the enormous importance of the various subjects commented on, and promised that immediate attention should be given to the preparation of some measure tending to prevent the interment of the dead in the midst of the living. What it is to be, or, indeed, if it is to be at all, is, nevertheless, still doubtful. It seems to us perfectly absurd, that earnest men should waste their time as deputations to point out again and again the same thing, and to obtain again and again the same acknowledgment of the truth of their statements, and the same promise to give the subject attention, which is forgotten, it would seem, as soon as the deputation has left.

ON THE FORM, TREATMENT, AND APPLICATION OF THE PEDIMENT.

The pediment is too often, I suspect, conceived of as a thing quite different in species to the primitive gable of the cottage or barn: in reality it is only the latter under artistic and refined treatment,—an architectural gable. Its first appearance was in Greek architecture, for there can scarcely be said to be a feature analogous to it in the Egyptian, Arabian, or other Oriental styles. It is in the north a natural and indispensable feature. Whether its elements were suggested by the roof of carpentry, and the whole a representative of its end or profile, is of little consequence. To me it appears quite independent of a timber prototype. It is the offspring of necessity, the natural termination of a roof, the inclination of which is made in reference to weather, and should be an index to the climate under which it is erected; and the aspiring, traceried, and crocketed gables, and gabled canopies,—those picturesque and often fantastic shapes that crown the ecclesiastical piles of the middle ages, must be considered as no less the result of the primitive barn-end than of the Greek *Eros*,—may be looked upon not only as the antique pediment freed from the laws of horizontal composition, and soaring under the inspiration of a new spirit, but as the primitive gable elevated by the influence of climatal requirements, infused with the soul of beauty, and translated from the lowly vale of physical exigency to the Olympian realm of art.

It is the æsthetic importance of the pediment or pointed gable that secured it so extensive an employment in Gothic architecture: nor is its æsthetic value less high in the classic, where it originated, than in the Gothic. Its use in composition is apparent when we consider how ennobling to a façade is the slightest elevation in the centre of the blocking course, or other crowning member, the remembrance of which generally inclines us to a pyramidal arrangement in any decoration placed over a flat cornice of a door or window. It appears to be an almost essential element of the picturesque. We can scarcely imagine a domestic building correct in expression without it. How Mr.

Ruskin can look on such an object as the pediment of the Parthenon, with its sculptural glories, and see no beauty in it, as he asserts, it is difficult to conceive. The basis of variety, which is one ingredient of beauty, is the difference or variation in elevation; and here, in the pediment, is a most harmonious one. What made our ancient streets so picturesque, and the houses so expressive of their domestic use,—what chiefly contributes to charm the traveller in the old avenues of continental cities, and is the chief ingredient of their picturesqueness—the main source of their effect,—is the gables, which we omit. With our better and larger slates and other modern appliances, their ancient steepness is no longer necessary; but the using them just as they are required by our necessities or comforts would greatly relieve our architecture, and secure a good skyline, to which nothing more effectively contributes than the extensive employment of the pediment. The want of gables to our houses is the chief cause of our monotony, and the employment of them on two sides of a square villa is not only far better in giving variety and pyramidal composition, than four straight cornices, with hipped and similar sides to the roof, but it would give more headway and useful space within the house. The pediment is the natural brow of the portico or façade, and gives a noble and intellectual look to the composition it crowns. It is the most suitable part for indicating, by the character of its ornamentation—the grandeur or the grace of its treatment—the destination of an edifice. Like the human brow, it should be expressive, and indicate by its decoration something of the nature of the enshrined. The ancients are supposed to have placed the eagle (the bird of Jove) on the apex of the temples of Jupiter, and with us there is no place so fitted for the chief object of decoration as the pediment: both its interior and exterior, i. e. its tympanum and its centre and extreme points without, present a most legitimate field for its display. If you possess but one detached figure with which to decorate and give animation to the building, or can afford but a single subject in bas-relief, the pediment presents its summit or its tympanum as the most proper and dignified position for its reception, where it will be the more beautiful if really an artistic work and in unison with the architecture, from beaming forth amid surrounding barrenness of decoration,—

“Fair as a star when only one is shining in the sky.”

The first thing to be considered in reference to the pediment is, where it is to be placed. In architectural and art glossaries the pediment is defined as an ornament placed over doors, gates, windows, altars, niches, &c. but this, like too many other popular explanations, is a superficial and false one; for the pediment in reality should never be placed merely as an ornament anywhere: it should be placed, and placed only, where it will be an essential part of the structure, or justified more or less by utility. In short, it is only proper where it is the termination of a roof. We should ever bear in mind the original purpose out of which any feature arose. There are architectural members that are purely æsthetic, and æsthetic reasons are a sufficient vindication of their use; but there are others that should never be used but where their introduction will receive the sanction of utility. Such is the pediment, which is not a decorative feature, but a decorated utility—a piece of adorned structure; and no apology on the ground of beauty is sufficient for a useless pediment, which, with idle columns or other leading features wittingly and unmeaningly employed, must ever be a blot on the design,—a sin not against purity of style merely, but against natural propriety and architectural truth. It would surely be ridiculous if, when raising the great stones in the erection of a portico in front of a building, when asked what was the object aimed at, the architect could only reply that it was to throw a shadow, or series of shadows, on some wall. To add irrelevant features to an edifice shows a want of faith in the power of the art as a creator of beauty, or in the beauty of truth, which is itself a higher beauty; and scenic magnificence,

unmeaning exterior pomp, which belies, or is belied by, the interior distribution, is not only not beautiful in art, but is a positive deformity; for real interior grace and genuine external beauty, like the soul and the body, must ever be in perfect harmony with, and illustrate, each other.

In placing the pediment, we should be guided by the general form of the building and arrangement of the plan, for almost every building will, if rationally treated, have a pediment. Now, I would have the pediment terminating the end of an oblong building or gallery, as in the Hall of Worthies, at Munich, which has the advancing wings so finished, not because that position is conformable to the best ancient examples, as would, I fear, be the motive of some, but because it is the natural and proper place for it,—the place where alone it can have any meaning. In the British Museum, as in too many other important edifices, it has been misplaced; for, while it is omitted on the ends, where it would have structural significance and justification, it is introduced in the centre, where it is little better than a mask.

I consider a pediment little better than a mask when it surmounts a portico of but one intercolumniation in projection and five or seven in breadth, because the portico it crowns affording no shelter either from rain or sun, is of no use. Besides, it is misplaced: it has no business over the long side of a portico any more than over the longer side of a building, at least over one so disproportioned to the width. There is a reason for this position in small window or door pediments, but these porticoes should more properly have half pediments at each end.

Such half pediments terminating in front the leaning roofs of the side aisles in a Classic or Italian church, as in that of La Villette, at Paris, and some other edifices, is not a misapplication of the pediment; but to cut up a straight façade into several parts by slight breaks of a few inches, and crown each alternate one with a pediment merely to break the sky line, is using a great structural feature for mere decoration, and giving it employment beneath its dignity.

The practice of placing small pediments supported on trusses over doors and windows, has been much criticised; but as it holds out the advantage of throwing the water sideways instead of in front, and thus rendering greater protection to the window or door beneath it, I think, admissible, though they as well as straight cornices might, doubtless, be rendered more useful than they are, and, consequently, less objectionable, by greater projection, which could be given generally without violation of æsthetic law.

Placed, however, over a pseudo-portico of attached columns, with no projection and sheltering nothing, as in the front of St. Peter's at Rome, where it moreover mutilates the attic order above, and is without adequate decoration, is a corrupt practice. It is indefensible; for the columns and entablature it covers are so, the whole being a senseless mask.

Pediments, and indeed cornices, over doors or windows under shelter of a portico, or in interiors, though often seen, are in reality a monstrosity. Though using the pediment chiefly for the purpose of decoration, we should refer to its natural types, and be guided by its structural theory. If we did this, not only would the practice I have just referred to be avoided, but many others also—many of those practices for which, though introduced by great masters, we can see no type in the gallery of nature, nor find justification in reason. We should then also eschew the placing of pediments within pediments, where artistically they destroy each other; or bending them to a cylindrical plan, and turning them round a corner, as many Italians have done, with other practices that structurally could scarce be perpetrated.

I should not consider it worth while to notice these corruptions of Italian design, introduced, as most of them were, by the painter-architects to produce painterlike effects, but for the proneness of our architects to reproduce them, forgetting, like their original